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**MADAGASCAR**

## SUCCESS STORY

# ICT opens communities to the world

### Telecenter improves communication in the village of Ranomafana



Pact Madagascar, 2007

*As Pastor Haingo Ramarokoto said, "the presence of an Information Center is very helpful for me and useful for the local community as they have the opportunity to increase their knowledge, find a job, communicate and interact with professionals in various business fields, and save time and money for additional activities".*

Madagascar Last Mile Initiative (MLMI) contributes to improved governance in targeted areas of the USAID program in Madagascar by working with civil society, government and local businesses to increase information flow to participants in the development process. MLMI Community Information Centers make it possible for people living in remote rural areas to access ICT services.

Haingo RAMAROKOTO is the pastor of a Protestant Church in Ranomafana, a small tourist village about an hour and a half drive from the next largest town, Fianarantsoa. She is one of those who, once a week, makes the long 80km trek to Ranomafana in order to communicate with her family and friends.

USAID put in place a Community Information Center (Telecenter) to address these communication issues and foster local development. Before the Telecenter was established, it was hard to contact the outside world. There were no cell phone or internet services. The only available fixed line was a pay phone for the whole community. Communication was difficult with areas outside of Ranomafana. One has to spend a whole day travelling to and from Fianarantsoa. This means losing a day of work in addition to paying transport fees.

With the new Telecenter, Pastor Ramarokoto easily keeps in touch with her family and friends in Madagascar, and feels closer to her family abroad. Instead of spending the day in Fianarantsoa, Pastor Ramarokoto can walk down the street to chat with her family, which she does at least once a day for five to ten minutes.

It is easier now for Pastor Ramarokoto to work with her colleagues throughout the country and fulfil her duties as the pastor for the largest Protestant Church in Madagascar.

The Telecenter is one of the projects funded under the Madagascar Last Mile Initiative (MLMI) and contributes to the 'ICT for All' program led by the Ministry of Telecommunications.